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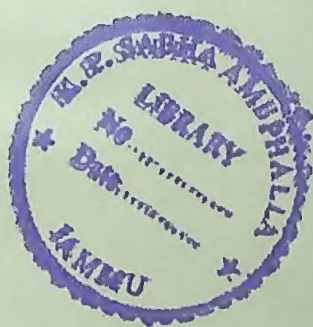
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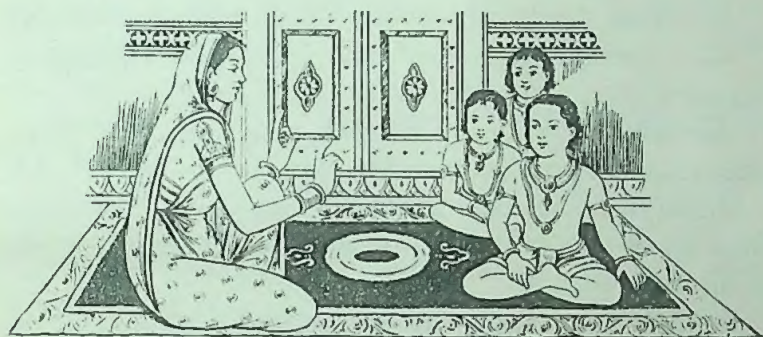
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(1) Agastya swallowing the ocean

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥



The KALYANA-KALPATARU

OR

THE BLISS

A MONTHLY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF SPIRITUAL
IDEAS AND LOVE FOR GOD

New Series

June 1996

No. 9

Vol. XLI

आतापी मारितो येन वातापी येन भक्षितः ।

समुद्रः शोषितो येन स मेज्जस्त्यः प्रसीदतु ॥

"Be that Agastya propitious to me who killed Ātāpī,
ate away Vātāpī and swallowed the ocean."



Dialogue with the Lord During Meditation

(Continued from page 772)

—Late Sri Jayadayal Goyandka

S—What should the devotee do for Your realization?

L—I have already said that he should completely surrender himself to Me.

S—Why do You not Yourself take him under Your shelter and make him surrender himself to You?

L—It is not My duty to enforce surrender in a devotee. The duty of the devotee lies in surrendering himself to Me of his own accord.

S—Do You extend any help to those who desire to surrender themselves out of reasoning and discrimination?

L—He who seeks help out of a sincere heart certainly receives it.

S—Can worldly prosperity, supernatural powers, the celestials and other beings of the subtle world put any obstacle in the spiritual progress of one who desires to surrender himself to You for Your realization?

L—None of these can put any obstacle in his path.

S—It is generally found that those who cultivate devotion to You have to face many dangers and difficulties in life, which sometimes act as hindrances in their spiritual path.

L—They have not exclusively surrendered themselves to Me.

S—Do they gain the supernatural powers after Your realization?

L—The devotee has no need for them.

S—Can the devotee gain them, if he so desires?

L—My devotee can never cherish any desire for them, and if he does he has not exclusively surrendered himself to Me.

S—After Your realization what right or privilege is gained by Your devotee?

L—He does neither believe he has gained any right, nor does he seek to gain any.

S—May You not grant him some privilege, even if he may not seek it?

L—Yes, I grant it to him when it is required for serving any necessity of Mine.

S—Have You also any necessity, Lord?

L—Yes, I have. Propagation of the ideas of religion and devotion to God, etc., is necessary for the good of the world. That is my necessity.

S—How much privilege do You grant him at the time?

L—It depends on the amount of work I have to take from him.

S—Do You grant this privilege to all Your devotees, or to only a select few among them?

L—Except *Sādhakas* who are passive or indifferent, I may grant the privilege to all those who are prepared and willing to accept it with pleasure.

S—Whom do You regard as qualified to receive the privilege in its entirety for the propagation of ideas of religion, right conduct and devotion? What is the character of the devotee to whom You may grant the whole privilege?

L—I may grant this privilege in its entirety to the loving and supremely compassionate devotee of a generous nature whose nature is to sacrifice his all spontaneously for the good of others whose thoughts ever flow towards others' good, and whoever feels and remains happy in the happiness of others.

S—Do not, then, all Your devotees develop the same character and qualifications after Your realization?

L—No, they do not. Whatever character they show at the time of their spiritual practice, they generally maintain even after realisation. The common factor is that there is a total absence of modifications like joy and grief, attraction and repulsion, lust and anger, etc., among them. Qualifications like equanimity, peace and bliss are found equally among them, and they never do anything in contravention of the injunctions of the scriptures. Though all their activities follow the lines laid down by Me (in the scriptures), they are all the same different in every individual case.

S—What is the reason for this difference in their external activities?

L—Some possess the nature of doing spiritual practice in retirement and some of doing service. These external activities differ according to the differences of nature, pre-determined *Karma* and intellect of the devotees, as well as differences of place, time and circumstances.

S—In that case, he is the best among them to whom You may grant the full privilege.

L—Use of comparison is out of place here. All of them are best. He who is by nature inclined towards activities is specially entrusted with the responsibility to work.

S—All should feel an equal enthusiasm in carrying out a work enjoined by You.

L—It is true that all of them feel an equal enthusiasm in carrying out my work, but I distribute the work according to their nature. There are some who love to remain constantly by My side, I, therefore, do not send them out. I entrust him with service of the people who is inclined to that form of service. One who is inclined to the life of a recluse, I generally do not entrust with

any work. I distribute the work according to the nature and capacity of the devotee.

S—The devotee should develop the nature that You may entrust any special work to him without any hesitation. What are the best means of developing this nature?

L—Complete and wholehearted surrender to Me alone.

S—Kindly explain for our benefit what is meant by complete surrender?

L—Constant remembrance of, and meditation on, My Name and Form with consciousness of their virtues and power, carrying out of My instructions for My pleasure without break in remembrance and remaining ever happy in My dispensation.

S—O Lord, meditation on Your Form appeals to my heart also. But the mind is unsteady. It runs away quickly hither and thither. How shall I account for this?

L—Owing to attachment the mind finds a pleasure in the enjoyment of worldly things. It has become a store of the impressions of *Karma* of many lives. These do not allow the mind to become steady.

S—Why does it dwell on useless things which serve no purpose of mine and for which I have no particular attachment?

L—By nature the mind is fickle and unsteady. It is its habit to dwell on useless things and it finds a pleasure in such thoughts. This is also a form of attachment, that is why it dwells on such thoughts.

S—What is to be done to remedy this?

L—The mind should be carefully watched that it may not leave the meditation of My Form and take to thoughts of worldly things. If that is not sufficient to prevent the continuation of such thoughts, it should be expostulated or forcibly withdrawn from such thoughts, and employed again and again with determination in the meditation of My Form.

S—How can the mind be withdrawn from thoughts of other things?

L—When a small child picks up a sharp knife, the mother expostulates with the child and removes the knife from its hands. If the child due to ignorance and foolishness begins to resist the mother, and mother will be indifferent to its cries and forcibly take away the knife. Even so, the mind should be remonstrated and cured of its habit of pursuing worldly thoughts; for it is as fickle and unsteady as a small child. It does not and cannot consider the harm its vagaries may bring one in the future.

S—One may not even know when the mind will give him the slip and quickly grasp an object. What should one do to remedy this?

L—Just as a mother constantly keeps watch over her child, even so the mind should be watched.

S—But the mind is fickle, strong and wayward, therefore it appears extremely difficult to control it.

L—True it is somewhat difficult to control, but not so difficult as you imagine it to be. For it can be brought under control through effort. The difficulty of the task should not make one despair. The mother never considers the task of protecting her child difficult. If she does so, the protection of her child will be impossible.

S—Is the mind exactly like a small child?

L—No, it is stronger and more wayward than a child.

S—Then, how is it to be brought under control?

L—It can be brought under control, for the intellect is more powerful than the mind, and you (the soul) is still more powerful. Just as a mother controls her small child either with the help of a grown-up daughter or holding some temptation before it, and if the child still persists to be wayward she changes its course from evil to good by a show of threat, even so, the mind has to be restrained through

the intellect by showing it the evil effects of a life of enjoyment. Thus withdrawing it from the perishable, transient objects of the world, it should be fixed again and again on Me.

S—However much I may try on this line, I do not see any prospect of victory.

L—Persevere, even if you do not attain victory. Do not get depressed. When you have My support, there is no cause for despair. Have faith that if you continue the fight, ultimately the victory is sure to be yours.

S—O Lord, when I retire to a solitary place and attempt to fix the mind in meditation on You, sleep and lethargy begin to trouble me. Please tell me what I should do to get over this difficulty?

L—The food you take should be light and pure. You should sit still in a Yogic posture, e.g., the Lotus or *Swastika* posture without feeling any inconvenience, keeping your spine erect and fixing the sight on the tip of the nose. Then you should offer prayers and chant hymns in praise of Me. You should go on repeatedly chanting and bringing to your mind whatever you have heard from the lips of the saints and read in the scriptures about the glory of My Name, Form, virtues, sports and powers. This will cause the growth of the pure Sattvic sentiment and bring awakening to the intellect. When this awakening takes place, sleep and lethargy, which are the expressions of *Tamoguna*, cannot exercise any influence.

S—O Lord, you have said in the *Gītā* that Your realization becomes easy when one takes to constant remembrance of You, for You then quickly deliver one from the ocean of metempsychosis by giving protection to his spiritual practices and remedying the deficiencies in them. But it does not appear to me that Your realization is so easy or can be achieved so quickly as You describe it to be.

L— You do not practise constant remembrance of Me therefore My realization appears difficult to you.

S—I admit, Lord, that what You say is true. Through constant remembrance of You, Your realization may be both quick and easy. But constant remembrance itself is a difficult affair. How is this habit to be developed?

L—The practice of constant remembrance appears difficult to you because you do not know My virtues, power, truth and mystery. As a matter of fact, it is not so difficult.

(To be continued)



स्त्रीभिर्भर्तृवचः कार्यमेष धर्मः परः स्त्रियाः ।

आशुद्धेः संप्रतीक्ष्यो हि महापातकदूषितः ॥

"It is the duty of a wife to obey scrupulously the commands of her husband. It is the ultimate *Dharma* of a wife. If the husband is guilty of some great sin like *Brahmahatyā*, she must wait for him till he is purified again after expiatory performances."

—Yājñavalkya Smṛti (I. 77)

Worry, depression, unholy thoughts, anger and hatred produce a kind of crust or dark layer on the surface of the mind or astral body. This crust or rust or dirt prevents the beneficial influences from getting entry inside and allows the evil forces or lower influences to operate. Worry does great harm to the astral body and the mind. Energy is wasted by the worry habit. Nothing is gained by worrying. It causes inflammation of the astral body and drains the vitality of man. It should be eradicated by vigilant introspection and by keeping the mind fully occupied.

—Swami Sivananda

Real Education

—Swami Ramsukhdas

All human beings without exception are really speaking, students. Apart from them all other species— gods, demi-gods (Yakṣa etc.), ogres, animals, birds etc., mobile or immobile are meant for only experiencing pleasure or pain. Only human class is provided with an opportunity to attain God-realization (*Brahma Vidyā*). It is not meant for its indulgence with nescience (*Avidyā*) or worldly enjoyment.

The purpose of getting human body, is only God-realization. Therefore to realize God only, is humanity. This is why the human class is known as a species for spiritual discipline (to attain Godhood). Human beings in their present form face different circumstances favourable or unfavourable. If a man experiences pleasure or pain in favourable or unfavourable circumstances; in such a case he also belongs to the class meant for working out their destiny. If he performs new actions with a view to enjoy pleasures then also it is *Bhoga* that predominates. Therefore wise is he who takes these favourable and unfavourable circumstances as means to attain the ultimate object, and does his actions neither for enjoyments nor attaining heaven etc. Humanity lies in making efforts towards God-realization and doing only good actions in consonance with the injunctions of the scriptures. From this angle each and every human being is a student or a striver.

The human life has been divided into four stages—*Brahmacarya* (celibacy), *Gr̥hastha* (household life),

Vānaprastha (penance in forest) and *Śaṁnyāsa* (renunciation). The life span taken to be one hundred years, twenty five years have been fixed for each one of them. While in celibate life a student is expected to abide by the orders of the *Guru*, in household life entertaining the guests, in forest life practising penances and in renunciation meditating on *Brahma* are prominent.

Celibates are of two types—*Naiṣṭhika* and *Upakurvāṇa*. The former are those who proceed on the path of God-realization following the rules of unbroken celibacy by discarding all attachments to enjoyments through discrimination. The latter are those who cannot renounce the worldly enjoyments through exercising discrimination and enter household life just to overcome their sense of attachment through enjoyment. They marry according to the scriptural injunctions, lead a righteous life, earn and enjoy money but always with the sense of renunciation. Religiousness always dominates their life. By following *Dharma* scrupulously they automatically develop the sense of detachment to the worldly pleasure and accumulating wealth and they march towards God.

Question—Who is termed as a student?

Answer—One who wants to confine himself to the study is a learner or student. The term *Vidyārthī* literally means one who wants *Vidyā*. Which *Vidyā*? *Brahma-Vidyā* (spiritual knowledge) the best among all knowledges (*Gītā* X. 32).

Question—What is the real nature of *Vidyā*?

Answer—Generally to know anything is *Vidyā*. The knowledge of several sciences, arts and crafts, languages etc. But real *Vidyā* is that after aquisition of which nothing remains to be known, the soul becomes liberated—"सा विद्या या विमुक्तये" (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* I.19.41). If there remains something to be known then the so called *Vidyā* is no *Vidyā*.

There is one *Śabda Brahma* (*Veda*) and the other *Parabrahma* (Absolute the Supreme). If one knows the *Śabda Brahma* in other words he is proficient in *Vedas* but does not know *Parabrahma*, then all his labour is a waste.

शब्दब्रह्मणि निष्णातो न निष्णायात् परे यदि ।

श्रमस्तस्य श्रमफलो ह्यधेनुमिव रक्षतः ॥

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* XI. 11. 18)

Therefore the knowledge of the Supreme Essence is the real knowledge and therein lies the very success of human life.

The science through which the livelihood is earned and employment is obtained, is also science no doubt, but it is not helpful in God-realization. On the contrary due to the pride caused by it, the mundane knowledge becomes a hurdle in the path of God-realization. A person proud of his learning if happens, to meet a God-realized saint, may be that he would rebut the points established by the exalted soul and silence him through his arguments. But in that case he would be deprived of the real spiritual benefit. It is said—

षडङ्गादिवेदो मुखे शास्त्रविद्या
कवित्वादि गद्यं सुपद्यं करोति ।

यशोदाकिशोरे मनो वै न लग्नं

ततः किं ततः किं ततः किं ततः किम् ॥

"There's no use of a person getting a thorough knowledge of the Vedic literature alongwith its six limbs getting proficiency in composing fine prose or poetry if he has not cultivated devotion towards the Lord Kṛṣṇa".

Question—What is the necessity of acquiring spiritual knowledge?

Answer—Without knowledge human life is not only meaningless but it remains no better than animal life. Therefore this knowledge is indispensable.

Every project is undertaken with certain aim only. Human life aims at the absolute absence of sorrow and ultimate bliss. If this aim is not achieved, there's no justification in being called human. In such a case the man also comes in the class of beasts and birds which are born only for undergoing through pains and pleasure already destined. Even after getting an opportunity of God-realization if the man entangles himself in the worldly affairs, he is bound for his downfall and is no better than the creatures belonging to the *Bhoga Yoni*. What is human in him if he acts to result in going through eighty-four lakh species; for being born and meeting death again and again? Therefore while in human form one must try for God-realization which is the greatest gain without any superior to it.

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।

यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥

(Gītā VI. 22)

"Having obtained which he does not reckon any other gain as greater than that, and established in which he is not shaken even by the heaviest of sorrows."

Really speaking the knowledge Divine is only *Vidyā* and the other knowledges are nothing but nescience. This is because after obtaining knowledge Divine there remains nothing else to be obtained but it does not mean that the other mundane subjects should not be studied. No, they also should be studied. The other languages, scripts etc., should be learnt, but to remain engrossed in them is bad because by remaining engrossed in them, human life will go in vain. There is one more point by studying the mundane sciences, a sense of pride—"I am highly educated"—is developed which strengthens the bondage more.

शास्त्राण्यधीत्यापि

भवन्ति

मूर्खा

यस्तु

क्रियावान्पुरुषः

स

विद्वान् ।

"The ignorance does not go even after having the scriptures thoroughly studied. Infact the real scholar is he who translates the scriptural ordinances into practice."

The aim of human life is God-realization and the means for it is rendering service to the world. So the utility of mundane knowledge, riches, and ranks is just in serving the world. They have their utility only with reference to the universal service and not in God-realization because God-realization is not subject to mundane knowledge. One who possesses mundane knowledge, the responsibility of social service comes to his shoulder only as octroi duty is imposed on the amount of goods, and the tax is proportionate to the income. No goods, no octroi and no income, no tax that is the rule. The praise offered on account of worldly sciences, riches and ranks is in a way a censure to the person. In other words, whatever credit there is, it goes to his possessions not to him. He remains a prey to the censure. Therefore he who regards himself superior because of his possessions actually makes himself inferior.

Question—Is the study recommended only in young age or throughout the life?

Answer—The rule that the study should be made in young age only, is meant for *Upakurvāṇa Brahmacārīs*. A *Naiṣṭhika Brahmacārī* should study the scripture and spiritual science throughout his life.

Question—What happens to a student who passes away while studying?

Answer—Study is a process of austerity which purifies a student—

स्वाध्यायाभ्यासनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ।

(*Gītā* XVII. 15)

So he is much better to those entangled in worldly pleasure and accumulating wealth. He is superior to them to the extent he has renounced the enjoyments and worldly possessions.

At the time of death, whatever subject a student is desirous to learn the same subject he will study guided by the latent impressions of his previous birth.

One who studies for the sake of his livelihood only, if dies in the meantime, will meet with the fate of a common man. It is for the simple reason that it is the ideas that count not actions so far as the ultimate good is concerned.

One who acquires knowledge in order to insult or humiliate others, if passes away in the middle, becomes ghost, goblin or any other being of the same class. One who is interested only in studying books and acquiring knowledge of those books, if dies in the process, then he guided by that impression, will again take human birth and study those books. It is more than enough if a student of this type gets human birth again. If he dies while studying a book on spiritual science and if there is an eagerness in him to know the ultimate truth then he will get liberated. If he does not have that eagerness he will get deviated from the *Yoga*.

If a person makes a study of the sciences taking it to be a command from God and dies in the process while remembering the Lord at the time of breathing his last, he will be released from the bondage (*Gītā* VIII. 5). If he does not remember God at the time he will fall from the path of *Yoga*.

(To be continued)



It isn't that suddenly the light of God descends on us and makes us instant saints. No; it is a daily effort to change ourselves and to surrender heart, mind, and soul to God, in meditation and in activity.

—Self-Realization

True Valour

—Late Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar

Having lost the game of dice through the cunning of Śakuni, king Yudhiṣṭhira had to pass twelve years in exile and another incognito in order to redeem his pledge. After completing this ordeal, he sent *Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa* Himself as an envoy to Duryodhana to press his rightful claim for the restoration of his kingdom kept heretofore as security with Duryodhana. *Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa* tried His best to bring Duryodhana to reason through words full of wisdom and righteousness. But Duryodhana was a hard nut to crack. He openly declared—"Kṛṣṇa! I am not going to surrender even so much land to the *Pāṇḍavas* as can be pierced by the point of a sharp needle."*

Having failed in His mission at Hastinapur, the Lord went over to Kuntī and told her all that had passed between Him and Duryodhana. Mother Kuntī, following the example of the valiant Kṣatriya lady Vidulā, sent her messenger† to Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and Arjuna, calling upon them to fight heroically. She addressed the following words to Yudhiṣṭhira—

"Wage war as enjoined upon a member of the warrior clan; hurl not your ancestors into the abyss of hell and shorn of all religious merit meet not alongwith your

* यावद्धि तीक्ष्णया सूच्या विद्धयेदग्रेण केशव ।
तावदप्यपरित्याज्यं भूमेर्नः पाण्डवान् प्रति ॥

(*Mahā. Udyoga.* 127.25)

† The full message is given in the *Mahābhārata*, *Udyogaparva*, chapters 132 to 137.

brothers the doom of sinners."*

"I bow to the divine law which is sustaining all creation. Kṛṣṇa! You will tell Arjuna, the conqueror of riches, and the ever-active Bhīma that the time has come for which a *Kṣatriya* lady gives birth to a son. Coming into conflict with anyone, great men never lose heart."†

On receiving the above message from their mother, Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers were compelled to engage in war even unwillingly.

This teaches us that if anybody wrongs us, we should as far as possible expostulate with him in order to bring him round. If he turns a deaf ear to our remonstrance, he should be bribed over and shown that his interest lies that way. Should this policy also fail and we have to fall back upon the expedient of force, we should take to that course keeping in view the common weal. Where failure to employ force causes serious harm to the world, such failure on the part of a wise man constitutes an act of cowardice rather than compassion. When at the sight of friends and relatives ranging on both sides Arjuna showed his unwillingness to fight, and addressed the following words to the Lord—

"O slayer of Madhu, I do not want to kill them, though they should slay me even for the throne of all the three worlds; how much the less for earthly lordship. Kṛṣṇa, how can we hope to be happy slaying the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra;

* युध्यस्व राजधर्मेण मा निमज्जीः पितामहान्।

मा गमः क्षीणपुण्यस्त्वं सानुजः पापिकां गतिम्॥

(Mahā. Udyoga, 132.34)

† नमो धर्माय महते धर्मो धारयति प्रजाः।

एतद्भनंजयो वाच्यो नित्योद्युक्तो वृकोदरः॥

यदर्थं क्षत्रिया सूते तस्य कालोऽयमागतः।

न हि वैरं समासाद्य सोदन्ति पुरुषर्षभाः॥

(Mahā. Udyoga, 137.9-10)

killing these desperadoes, sin will surely take hold of us"*

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa condemned this idea of Arjuna as full of cowardice and commanded him to fight. He said—

"Arjuna, how has this infatuation overtaken you at this odd hour? It is shunned by noble souls; neither will it bring heaven, nor fame, to you. Yield not to unmanliness, Arjuna; ill does it become you. Shaking off this paltry faint-heartedness stand up, O scorcher of enemies."†

Therefore, realizing this purport of the *Gītā*, one must patiently and in a dignified way take recourse to bravery on such occasions. Harming anybody in anyway through mind, speech or body with a malicious spirit and in a fit of anger without weighing the pros and cons of one's action is not bravery but wanton violence. Hence, when someone comes to tyrannize over us or anyone else, we should retaliate only after duly weighing the pros and cons of the situation, and with exemplary patience. In the great *Rājasūya* sacrifice undertaken by the *Pāṇḍavas* when Śiśupāla, upset by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's receiving the highest honour as a guest, began to heap vile abuses of various kinds on Him, the Lord patiently bore them and calmly and fearlessly told the distinguished gathering how Śiśupāla was misbehaving. At this the villain laughed and began to prattle all the more, offering insult to the Lord. At last when his insolence grew out of all proportions, the Lord was compelled to punish him. This is an outstanding

* एताव हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतेऽपि मधुसूदन । अपि त्रैलोक्यराजस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रतः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन । पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥

(*Gītā* I. 35-36)

† कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।
 अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥
 क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
 क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप ॥

(II. 2-3)

example of bravery combined with patience and dignity of bearing. Therefore, even killing anyone as a matter of duty for the good of the world, being all the time free from egoism, attachment, the sense of possession and selfishness, is no violence. The Lord says in the *Gītā*—

"He, whose mind is free from the sense of doership and whose reason is not affected by worldly objects and worldly activities, even though he may kill all these people, he does not kill nor is he bound by sin."*

Therefore, in the event of a strong man subjecting a woman, a child, an orphan, a destitute, a man in distress or a weakling to oppression of any kind anywhere, and where the milder methods of persuasion and inducement do not avail, force should be employed with a view to counteracting the evil. But the use of force should always be divorced from egoism, selfishness and attachment. Even if one has to lose his life in such circumstances, such a death should be actually regarded as a blessing. Similarly, if some one oppresses us and thereby causes harm to us or to anyone else, it is no sin to retaliate in self-defence with a mind free from attachment or ill-will. *Bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā*—

"Treating alike victory and defeat, gain and loss, pleasure and pain, get ready for the fight, then; fighting thus you will not incur sin."†

If a man professing another faith forces one to give up one's faith, one should lay down one's life rather than

* यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।
हत्वापि स इमाल्लोकाह्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥

(XVIII. 17)

† सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥

(*Gītā* II. 38)

give up one's faith. Herein lies one's salvation. The Lord says in the *Gītā*—

"Even death in the performance of one's duty brings blessedness; another's duty is fraught with fear.*

Those ignorant folk alone who regard the body as the soul, that is to say, who believe the soul to die with the body, begin to tremble in encountering a wanton attack and cannot boldly resist it. But those who, through a study of the *Gītā*, have realized the true nature of the soul, do not believe that the soul dies with the body. The Lord has laid down the principle in the *Gītā* that what is real never ceases to be and what is unreal does not endure. According to this principle the soul, which is inactive, immutable and conscious, has been called real because it is eternal and imperishable; whereas the inert body, which is perishable, ephemeral and nothing but a continuous succession of changes, has been called unreal because it is transitory.

Therefore, those who have realized the nature of the soul fearlessly put an end to tyranny with patience and dignity of bearing.



* स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः।

(*Gītā* II. 38)

Wife—the Best Friend

Wife is an English word coming from an unknown origin. With reference to the family relation a married woman is known to be a wife to her husband. A word most frequently used but rarely appreciated so far as its meaning and implications are concerned. In India particularly in *Samskṛta* the word wife has got so many synonyms. The most commonly used word is 'पत्नी'. She is called a 'पत्नी' because without her presence no husband can perform a sacrificial ritual. Pāṇini in his aphorismsb (*Aṣṭādhyāyī*,) explains the nature and qualification of a 'पत्नी', in the *Sūtra*—'पत्युर्नो यज्ञसंयोगे' (IV. 1.33) which means that a wife is a 'पत्नी', only while participating in a sacrifice alongwith her husband. She is called 'पाणिगृहीती' also. This word indicates the matrimonial rituals for being a 'पत्नी' or 'पाणिगृहीती'—it is necessary that some groom must hold her hands. It is a very important *Samskāra* in Hindu marriages. She is called 'द्वितीया' also because due to her presence—the two become a couple. On account of her feeding and sustaining qualities, she is known as 'भार्या'. She is 'सहधर्मिणी' because she is an indispensable partner of the virtuous deeds performed by her husband "सह धर्मोऽस्त्यस्याः। पत्या सह कर्मस्वधिकारात्" (*Amarakośa* II.6.5), 'धर्मशीला वर्णान्ताच्च। पाणिनि (*Pāṇini* V.2.132), She is जाया' because the husband reappears in the form of a son from her womb 'जायायास्तद्धि जायात्वं यदस्यां जायते पुनः' (*Manusmṛti* IX. 8).

These are the common terms in *Samskṛta* for wife and each term is indicative of some particular quality or aspect. If a lady is devoid of any of the above qualities, she is

imperfect. Then there are certain other adjectival names like 'सुचरित्रा', 'सती', 'साध्वी', 'पतिव्रता' etc., but they are simply adjectives. They are not based on relations. In (II.6.7) Amara Sinha mentions certain other terms also, one of which ensures that there was polygamy current in the society.

After going through carefully all these qualities and aspects of a wife, we are but to agree with the famous law-giver Dakṣa that 'पत्नी' is the very cause of converting the domestic life into heaven. He says—"If the wife is agreeable, sweet of tongue, skilled, gentle, faithful and not self-exhibiting, she is a goddess and not a human being" (IV.3). The home where such couples abide, is undoubtedly a heaven. In the same way "when the wife is unpropitious and disagreeable, that home is decidedly a hell (IV.4). Even in heaven it is difficult to find such conjugal affection" (IV.5). People desire household life for comfort. "Wife is the very root of comfortable life. Only that woman can be called a 'पत्नी' who is disciplined, who cares always for what the husband desires and is well subordinated to him. A wife of accommodative nature is a divine boon."

In his *Kāvya Prakāśa* while defining the purpose of a poetic work Mammata used an expression 'कान्तासम्मिततपोपदेशयुजे' which means that a sweet poetic work should teach, preach and advise in a most palatable manner like utterances of a sweet wife. More often than not people do not relish a piece of advice given by others but if it is sweetened by the sweetness of wifely affection it becomes tasty and palatable. That is why it so appears that there cannot be a better friend than a good wife whose bitterness also is very often converted into sweetness. This fact was very well recognised by that poetic philosopher Mammata.

In Indian history we find wives sharing the responsibilities even in the most trying and critical period with their husbands.

Daśaratha was helped by Kaikeyī in the battlefield even at the cost of her physical injury. It is worth reading how Sāvitrī advised and persuaded Satyavān, her husband—to let her accompany him at that crucial and fateful day when he was destined to die. She prevailed upon him to permit her to go with him. It is well-known to everybody what and how Sāvitrī did without letting him know what was to happen and why she was so insisting. Satyavān had to surrender before her wifely arguments, good wishes and sweet logic. However the episode ended well and Sāvitrī got the due credit.

In *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* while Rāma was ready to depart from Ayodhya for the forest there was a dialogue between him and Sītā. Vālmiki has pictured Sītā's arguments in 27th, 29th and 30th cantoes of *Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa*. It is a worth reading piece in every respect—poetically, emotionally and logically. Marvellously sweet arguments from Sītā which compelled him to permit her to accompany him. That is exactly what Mammata referred to as 'कान्तासम्मिततपोपदेश.' Similar is the position of Goswāmī Tulasīdāsa in his *Rāmacaritamānasa*. Sītā's heart-rending emotional ejaculations are worth seeing. Goswāmījī was a master of the language. His Sītā says—

मैं सुकुमारि नाथ बन जोगू। तुम्हहि उचित तप मो कहूँ भोगू॥

(*Mānasa* II. 66.4)

"I am delicate of body and my lord, you are fit to bear the hardships of a forest life, it behoves you to undergo penance while it is worthwhile for me to loll in luxuries (is it so?)."

The entire dialogue is full of such lovely and delicate expressions. However Vyāsa in his *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* adopted a realistic attitude. Kausalyā in *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* speaks to king Daśaratha in a different tone. She says—

कैकेय्यै प्रियभार्यायै प्रसन्नो दत्तवान्वरम् ।
 त्वं राज्यं देहि तस्यैव मत्पुत्रः किं विवासितः ॥
 कृत्वा त्वमेव तत्सर्वमिदानीं किं नु रोदिषि ।
 (कौसल्यावचनं श्रुत्वा क्षते स्पृष्ट इवाग्निना ॥)

(II. 7. 16-17)

"Being charmed by her if you granted boons to Kaikeyī, it is alright. Give the throne to her son but why has my son been exiled?"

"It is all your doing. Why are you now weeping?"

It was an expression of a mother with severely injured heart whose only son was exiled for fourteen long years. But it does not mean that Kausalyā became unfaithful to her husband. If we go through the story of Damayantī and her doings we will come to the conclusion that Damayantī had surpassed all norms of conjugal fidelity.

Even in modern days with the exception of 'nursing home for old parents' culture, it is the wife who comes to the help of her sick husband and is serviceable as nobody else could be—not even sons and daughters. All relatives may abandon a person in a period of crisis but not the wife. She offers her ungrudging services to her husband till one of them breathes the last. After the demise of husband the wife leads the life of a *Saninyāsī*. She renounces all the auspicious marks and ornaments from her body. It is she who feels herself to be an orphan. Only the wife justifies the proverbial saying—"A friend in need is a friend indeed."



Thousands of lives can be sacrificed for the man whose words and heart are one.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

Invocation to Lord Gaṇeśa

गाइये गणपति जगबंदन । संकर-सुवन भवानी-नंदन ॥ १ ॥
सिद्धि-सदन, गज-बदन, बिनायक । कृपा-सिंधु, सुंदर, सब-लायक ॥ २ ॥
मोदक-प्रिय, मुद-मंगल-दाता । बिद्या-बारिधि, बुद्धि-बिधाता ॥ ३ ॥
माँगत तुलसिदास कर जोरे । बसहि रामसिय मानस मोरे ॥ ४ ॥

(*Vinaya Patrikā*)

Sing songs of glory to the master of *Gaṇas* (deities)
Lord Gaṇeśa, who is adored and worshipped
In this vast world, by one and all,
Who bow to him in reverent salutation.
Son of Lord Śiva and darling to mother Pārvatī,
He is the dispenser of all *Siddhis* (bounties),
Is elephant-faced and destroyer of all distress,
Ocean of mercy, handsome and paragon of virtues,
Fond of sweets (*Modaka*) and bestower of all benefits
and joys;
He is the sea of wisdom and the abode of massive
intellect.

Invoking Lord Gaṇeśa's grace Tulasī humbly prays
That Lord Rāma with His divine consort Sītā
May ever abide in the heart of the poet Tulasī.

—Translated by R. P. Dwivedi



Kriyā Yoga: The Way to Truth

—Swami Shraddhananda Giri

In his *Autobiography of a Yogī*, *Paramahansa Yogānanda*, has given a vivid account of the superhuman stature of his *Paramaguru* Lāhirī Mahāśaya and of the *Kriyā Yoga* technique introduced by him in this age.

Experiencing the Bliss—God—

"We know that man is usually helpless against evil passions," wrote an advanced *Kriyā Yogī*," but these are rendered powerless and man finds no motive for indulging in them when there dawns on him a consciousness of superior and lasting bliss through *Kriyā Yoga*. Here the give up, the negation of the lower nature, synchronizes with a take-up, the experience of beatitude. Without such a course, moral maxims that embody mere negatives are useless to us."

The Humiliating Pace of Diseaseless Evolution—

"The scriptures aver that man requires a million years of normal, diseaseless evolution to perfect his human brain and attain cosmic consciousness," said *Paramahansa Yogānanda*. "This numerical periphery is enlarged for the ordinary man, who lives in harmony not even with Nature, let alone his soul; pursuing instead unnatural complexities and offending in his thoughts and body the sweet sanities of Nature. For him, two times a million years can scarce suffice for liberation."

"Through proper food, sunlight, and harmonious thoughts, men who are led only by Nature and her divine plan will

achieve Self-realization in a million years. Twelve years of normal healthful living are required to effect even slight refinement in brain structure; a million solar returns are exacted to purify the cerebral tenement sufficiently for manifestation of cosmic consciousness."

The Kingly Science—

"The *Kriyā Yogī* mentally directs his life energy" "Paramahansaī explained," to revolve, upward and downward, around the six spinal centers (medullary, cervical, dorsal, lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal plexuses), which correspond to the twelve astral signs of the zodiac, the symbolic Cosmic Man. One-half minute of revolution of energy around the sensitive spinal cord of man effects subtle progress in his evolution; the half minute of *Kriyā* equals one year of natural spiritual unfoldment."

Referring to the sure and methodical efficacy of *Yoga*, Lord Kṛṣṇa praises the technological *Yogī* in the following words—"The *Yogī* is greater than body-disciplining ascetics, greater even than the followers of the path of wisdom (*Jñāna Yoga*), or of the path of action (*Karma Yoga*); be thou, O disciple Arjuna, a *Yogī*!" (*Bhagavadgītā* VI. 46).

The Glorious Road to Absolute Freedom—

"Identifying himself with a shallow ego, man takes for granted that it is he who thinks, wills, feels, digests meals, and keeps himself alive, never admitting through reflection (only a little would suffice) that in his ordinary life he is naught but a puppet of past actions (*Karma*) and of Nature or environment. Each man's intellectual reactions, feelings, moods and habits are effects of past causes, whether of this or a prior life. Lofty above such influences, however, is his regal soul. Spurning the transitory truths and freedoms, the *Kriyā Yogī* passes beyond all disillusionment into his unfettered being. The world's scriptures declare man to be not a corruptible body but a living soul; in *Kriyā*

Yoga he finds a method to prove the scriptural affirmation."

"The life of an advanced *Kriyā Yogī* is influenced...solely by directions from the soul.....Withholding his thoughts, will, and feelings from false identification with bodily desires, uniting his mind with superconscious forces in the spinal shrines, (he) lives in the world as God hath planned.....impelled neither by impulses from the past nor by fresh motivations of human witlessness. Receiving fulfilment of his Supreme Desire he is safe in the haven of inexhaustibly blissful Spirit."

"The telescopic methods of a *Yogī*...are therefore, commended to those who eye with revolt a thousand years," Śrī Yogānanda declared.

Self Mastery—

"In men under *Māyā* or natural law," *Paramahansa* Yogānanda wrote in his *Autobiography of a Yogī*," the flow of life energy is toward the outward world; the currents are wasted and abused in the senses. The practice of *Kriyā* reverses the flow."

"Introspection, or 'sitting in the silence,' is an unscientific way of trying to force apart the mind and senses, tied together by the life force. The contemplative mind is constantly dragged back toward the senses by the life currents. *Kriyā*, controlling the mind directly through the life force, is the easiest, most effective and most scientific avenue of approach to the Infinite. In contrast to the slow, uncertain 'bullockcart' theological path to God, *Kriyā Yoga* may justly be called the airplane route."

As a grateful truth-seeker, on receiving the *Kriyā Yogī* technique, thoughtfully spoke, "I am transported to find this Yogic key, long sought. Its unshackling effect on my sensory bonds will free me for higher spheres."

Spiritual Inquiry—

"Outward ritual cannot destroy ignorance, because they

are not mutually contradictory," wrote Ādi Śaṅkarācārya in his famous Century of Verses. "Realized knowledge alone destroys ignorance...Knowledge cannot spring up by any other means than inquiry. 'Who am I? How was this universe born? Who is its maker? What is its material cause?' This is the kind of inquiry referred to." The intellect has no answer for these questions; hence the Ṛṣis evolved *Yoga* as the technique of spiritual inquiry.

"Through the use of the *Kriyā* key," Śrī Yogānanda declared, "persons who cannot bring themselves to believe in the divinity of any man will behold at last the full divinity of their own selves."

The Universality of *Kriyā* Yoga—

"The mastery of breath, it is true, has occasionally been solved without the use of formal *Yoga* techniques," *Paramahansa* Yogānanda said—"As in the cases of...mystics who possessed transcendent powers of devotion to the Lord.... Most men are utterly incapable of summoning those irresistible powers of devotion that are effortlessly possessed only by a few *Ekāntins*, 'single-hearted' saints found in all religious paths.... Yet ordinary man is not therefore shut out from the possibility of divine communion. He needs, for soul recollection, no more than the *Kriyā* *Yoga* technique, a daily observance of the moral precepts, and an ability to cry sincerely; 'Lord, I yearn to know Thee!'"



If a man once tastes the Bliss of *Brahma*, then his mind no longer runs after the enjoyment of sense pleasures or wealth or name and fame. If the moth once sees the light, it no longer goes into the darkness.

—Sri Ramakrishna

Rāma Rājya

Śrī Rāma's installation to the throne brought joy to all the three spheres and ended all their sorrows. No one bore enmity to another; Śrī Rāma's glory had obliterated all disharmony.

Devoted to duty each according to his own caste and stage of life, the people trod the path of the *Vedas* and enjoyed happiness. They knew no fear, nor sorrow nor disease.

In the whole of Śrī Rāma's dominions there was none who suffered from affliction of any kind—whether of the body, or proceeding from divine or supernatural agencies or that caused by another living being. All men loved one another; each followed one's prescribed duty, conformably to the precepts of the *Vedas*. *Dharma* with its four pillars reigned everywhere throughout the world; no one even dreamt of sin. Men and women alike were devoted to Śrī Rāma's worship and all were qualified for final beatitude. There was no premature death nor suffering of any kind; everyone was comely and sound of body. No one was destitute, afflicted or miserable; no one was stupid or devoid of auspicious marks. All were unaffectedly good, pious and virtuous; all were clever and accomplished—both men and women. Everyone recognized the merits of others and was learned and wise; nay, everyone acknowledged the services and benefits received from others and there was no guileful prudence.

Listen, O king of the birds, during Śrī Rāma's reign there was not a creature in this world, animate or inanimate, that was liable to any of the sufferings attributable to time, past conduct, personal temperament and character.

Śrī Rāma, who reigned in Ayodhya, was the undisputed sovereign of the entire globe girdled by the seven oceans. This lordship was nothing great for Him every hair-hole in whose body contains myriads of universes. To him who has realized such infinite greatness of the Lord, even this description will sound highly disparaging. But even those, O king of the birds, who have realized the greatness of the Lord have turned round and conceived a fondness for this story of the Lord. For the immediate perception of such exploits of the Lord is the reward of knowing His infinite greatness: so declare the greatest of sages that have subdued their senses. The happiness and prosperity of Śrī Rāma's reign were more than even Śeṣa and Śārādā could describe. All were generous and all beneficent; men and women alike were devoted to the feet of the *Brāhmaṇas*. Every husband was pledged to a vow of monogamy and the wives too were devoted to their husband in thought, word and deed.

Daṇḍa, was never seen save in the hands of the recluse and *Bheda* too had ceased to exist except among the dancers in a dancing party. Even so the order 'Conquer!' was heard only with reference to the mind throughout the realm of Śrī Rāmacandra.

Trees in the forest blossomed and bore fruit throughout the year; the elephant and the lion lived together as friends. Nay, birds and beasts of every description had forgotten their natural animosities and developed friendly relations with one another. Birds sang and beasts fearlessly moved about in the woods in distinct herds, making merry all the time. The air breathed cool, soft and fragrant; bees hummed

even as they moved about laden with honey. Creepers and trees dropped honey to those who asked for it; cows yielded milk to one's heart's content. The earth was ever clothed with crops; even in the *Tretā* age the conditions of the *Satyayuga* prevailed. Conscious of the fact that the Ruler of the earth was no other than the Universal Spirit, the mountains brought to light their mines containing jewels of every description. Every river carried in it excellent water—cool, transparent and pleasant to the taste. The oceans kept within their bounds and scattered jewels on their shores for men to gather. Ponds were all thick with lotuses and every quarter was clear and bright.

The moon flooded the earth with her rays, while the sun shone just as much as was necessary. Similarly clouds poured forth showers for the mere asking so long as Śrī Rāmacandra wielded the sceptre.

—*Rāmacaritamānasa*



Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches, or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality; and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that, and criticise no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, or names, or sects, but that it means spiritual realisation. Only those can understand who have felt. Only those who have attained to spirituality can communicate it to others, can be great teachers of mankind. They alone are the powers of light.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

Medium of Instruction

(Continued from page 798)

—Mohan Lal Gupta

All the federal and state public service commission examinations must be conducted in Hindi all over India or at least Hindi should be included in the examinations in the states where Hindi is not the mother tongue.

For getting a job, knowledge of Hindi should be made compulsory. If a candidate does not know Hindi he or she should not be able to get a government job anywhere in India. People who are in government jobs but do not know Hindi, should be prematurely retired or should be given warning to learn Hindi within a grace period of six months otherwise lose the job.

It should be made mandatory for all government employees to speak, also to do their official correspondence in Hindi or other Indian languages at their work place. Speaking and use of English in government offices should be discouraged.

Government should grant financial aid to start newspapers and magazines in Hindi and other Indian languages and should place more advertisements in such language publications. Government should give less coverage in English and more in Hindi or other Indian languages on Radio and T.V. and should gradually eliminate English broadcasts for domestic purposes. In fact there should not be any broadcast in English on F.M., long or medium waves and very less on T.V.

Government should take steps so that Hindi be accepted

as the official language of UNO.

It would be in the fitness of things if Indian government, Indian scholars and various organisations endeavour to promote the *Devanāgarī* script as well.

A common script *Devanāgarī* could be beneficial as an additional aid to Indian languages for establishing closer educational, linguistic and cultural links at the national level.

Mahātmā Gāndhī was convinced that the *Devanāgarī* script could be used to bring about cohesion amongst different linguistic groups in India. *Nāgarī* is not the script of Hindi alone, but is also used for *Saṃskṛta*, Pāli, Marāṭhī and Nepālī as well.

It is interesting to note that many words in English language, where the same alphabets of Roman script carry different pronunciations, can be represented unambiguously in *Nāgarī* script. *Devanāgarī* is the only script with the capacity to represent long, medium and short sounds. This is because of the phonetic character of the script.

Nāgarī is the most scientific script in the world. It is the only script in the world where word is written as it is pronounced. Sometime ago German scientists conducted an experiment by making hollow bamboo pipe alphabets of various scripts of the world and to their surprise they found it was only *Devanāgarī* script where sound was according to the alphabets.

Nāgarī script suits even those dialects which do not have a script of their own. Among them there are various tribal dialects.

Knowledge of *Saṃskṛta* is an essential prerequisite to acquaint ourselves with our past grandeur and greatness, with the rich thought and spiritual aspirations. Therefore, *Saṃskṛta* is and can serve as the binding force for the Indian people. *Saṃskṛta* should be made a compulsory subject all over India from grade 4 to 8.

It would have been very easy to change over to Hindi at the time of independence of India but due to wrong policies of the Government we missed the opportunity and now it is becoming very difficult to change to Hindi from English.

It is a shame that the national language Hindi could not get its due place even after 48 years of independence. Due to the foreign rule for the last 1000 years, slavery has entered into the bones of the Indians. They want to imitate their past masters whoever they were and does not want to think independently. Unfortunately even independent India has not produced many visionary people except a few like Saradāra Patela, Rājendra Prasāda and some others, due to which slavish mentality is still lingering on.

It is the slave mind due to which English is the Associate Official language of India. This official status of English is dominating over all the Indian languages, due to which Indian languages, are not able to flourish or able to achieve their proper place. Due to slavish mentality, government, elite and educated people of Indian society are opposed to change from English to Hindi and other Indian languages.

As India was maintaining the British Empire, so the status for English as the Associate Official language in India is making it a world language. The day Hindi replaces English as the Associate Official language of India, English would not be the world language.

Hindi and *Sanskṛta* are the languages of the future. Hindi may not be the world language like English, but it would be a prominent language in Asian countries. Satellite T.V. programmes would help a lot in popularising Hindi in Asian countries.

There was never any need for any delegation in the past to go abroad for studying the ways for the promotion

of Hindi in the government offices and nor there would be any need in the future. If the government and the people of India decide and have will to give due place to Hindi, then Hindi would quite swiftly replace English from government as well as public life. The other countries and UNO would automatically accept Hindi as the major language of the world.



Schlegel says that in comparison with the Hindu thought, the highest stretches of European philosophy appear like dwarfish pigmies in the presence of grand, majestic Titans. In his work on Indian language, literature and philosophy, he remarks—"It cannot be denied that the early Indians possessed a knowledge of the true God, all their writings are replete with sentiments and expressions, noble, clear and severely grand, as deeply conceived and reverentially expressed as in any human language in which men have spoken of their God.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

God-realization does not depend upon the length of one's *Sādhanā*; it responds only to the intense longing of one's heart for it. The Lord immediately meets him whose heart can brook no more delay in seeing Him. By way of illustration, suppose a man all of a sudden slips down into a river and begins to drown in it; and the tragedy is that he does not know swimming. In that case the feverish urge that he feels to get out of the water—the thought which is uppermost in his mind at that time is how to reach the bank—this is what is known as intense longing.

—Jayadaya Goyandka

What is Paramātmā

—P. Govindarajan

Man thinks that he is the sole monarch of all he surveys and can get away with anything that he does. He feels that he enjoys unfettered freedom and uninhibited independence to act in any manner he likes and is not answerable to anyone for his actions. Even in regard to societal laws which place restrictions on some of his activities, the rich and the powerful try their best to bend or even break the law to have their own way. Modern generation does not believe in the old adage "Man proposes and God disposes." They think that none can stop them from doing what they want to. Is man really his own master or is there someone above him to whom he is accountable for his actions?

Life is full of ups and downs and man witnesses moments of both joy and sorrow. When misery and unhappiness strike man, he curses his fate for having been born little realizing that he had no choice of his own in regard to his birth. Does man have any choice in regard to his parents or the circumstances of his life at the time of his birth? No one knows who determines the time and place of birth, the sex, the complexion, the parents, the span of life etc., of human beings. Right at the start of life there are differences among human beings and some unfortunate ones are even born with deformities. Man has no options but to meekly accept his lot as given and live the life with whatever he has been physically endowed with.

Who decides the various aspects at the start of human

life and on what basis are such decisions made? Why should it be that some are born blind or mute or with physical or mental handicaps? The explanations given by scientists like 'freaks of nature' or 'purely accidental' etc., look in no way different from the argument of 'divine dispensation' advanced by the religionists to explain the inexplicable. These are not only unconvincing but also look perfunctory as they do not go into the reasons and causes for such abnormalities. Man can only pity the lot of the unfortunate few who are born with deformities and train them to live with their congenital handicaps. There is very little anyone can do about the physical endowments of life. What cannot be cured has necessarily to be endured. But the inquisitive mind of man is unable to remain in peace and it is always on the look out for convincing answers to these differences in human beings at the very start of life which apparently appear to him to be inequitable and unjust.

Nature has endowed man with intellect and free will and his sovereignty and autonomy is confined to the sphere of his own actions during his life time. Unlike animals man is expected to use his discriminating intellect before he decides to act. In practice man, however, is generally found to act impulsively and later regrets for his mistakes. All the religions of the world without any exception advocate performance of good actions and avoidance of evil deeds and most of them assure a happy life both here and in the hereafter to those who scrupulously adhere to the principles of morality. In fact, Hinduism, which believes in the transmigration of soul, goes one step further and says that human birth is not confined to one life only and the effects of sinful deeds of one birth can be felt in the subsequent births also.

Man generally takes a very short-term view of life and indulges in activities which will give him immediate

happiness. At the time of performance of patently unethical or even immoral deeds, he does not give any thought to the consequences of his actions and when misery knocks at his door he repents for his past misdeeds when it is too late to make amends.

Just as the physical universe is governed by physical laws, the human actions are governed by moral laws. As a man sows, so he reaps. The effect inevitably follows the cause as the shadow chases its substance. The moral law is based on justice and equity and none can escape the consequences of one's deeds. The operation of the moral law is not arbitrary or capricious as reactions unfailingly follow actions sooner or later. Nature takes its own time to respond. None can, therefore, even hope to succeed in the long run in breaking this unalterable eternal law.

Barring a few exceptions like Buddhism, Jainism etc., which do not believe in the existence of any Almighty God, all the other religions of the world believe that the creator of the universe is also the administrator of the inexorable physical and moral laws governing the world and human beings. Many among the rational and scientific minded people who do not believe in the existence of God raise several questions concerning Him—Where is God, does He have any form; how to see and communicate with Him; etc.

The astronauts of the erstwhile Soviet Union are reported to have searched for God in the outer space but could not find him. Is God in the high heavens or in the places of worship or in the faces of the poor or in the hearts of pure souls? Is God in the form of *Sat Cit Ānanda* i.e., Truth, Consciousness and Bliss or in the form of Love? Unless one knows for certain where God is and how he looks like, one cannot start the search.

God is described as omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient but such general description does not help one

to know Him. Similarly contrary descriptions of the Supreme Being as Infinitely greater than the greatest and infinitesimally smaller than the smallest only add to the confusion and deepen the mystery. If one should require clarity on the subject one should seek knowledge about God from a reliable and authoritative source. Who can give a better testimony than an eye-witness who has actually seen God. Has any sage or saint or prophet seen the Creator at any time in the past?

Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad, one of the ancient Indian scriptures categorically states "His form is not to be beheld; none whosoever beholds Him with the eye." This has been confirmed by St. John in his Gospel where he clearly says "No one has ever seen God."

If no human being has seen the form of Almighty at any time in the past, is the search for God worthwhile or is it merely a life long quest for a non-existent entity which may finally turn out to be an exercise in futility?

What about the verbal testimony of Jesus who says in his Sermon on the Mount "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." What about Chapter XI of *Gītā* where a graphic description of the form of the Supreme Being has been presented. Whom should one trust and whose words should one believe in?

When a saint was asked the question "Can I see God", he replied with a counter question, "Do you have the eyes to see God." True, how can the fleshy human eyes stand the dazzling effulgence of the Creator who is the very source of light of all heavenly bodies, who is as luminous as a thousand suns? Even if God, out of mercy, assumes a benign human form and appears before us can we recognize Him as such? In *Gītā*, the Lord says "The ignorant deride Me, who has taken a human form, not knowing My higher nature as the Supreme Lord of beings." What a pity!

From *Kenopaniṣad* we learn that the person who says he knows *Brahma* (Supreme Being) does not know it and those who say they do not know it, know something at least about it. Sage Lao Tse says "The Tao which can be expressed in words is not the eternal." The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* also says that the mind and speech return back as the Supreme Being is beyond sense-perception and intellect.

What can one make out about God out of these puzzling statements which does not lead us anywhere and only add to our confusion? One thing, however, looks fairly certain from the utterances of realized souls that it is impossible to comprehend God fully through the intellect; it is also not that we cannot know anything about Him. This is clearly brought out in one of the verses of *Kenopaniṣad* which says "I do not think I know well. Not that I do not know; I know too."

It is quite evident from the Eleventh Chapter of *Gītā* that one cannot see God with his physical eyes and one should equip oneself with the Divine or spiritual eye to have a vision of God. The pure in heart referred to by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount probably refers to those with the spiritual awakening of the single inner eye developed through absolute purity of head and heart. Meditation which takes the form of ceaseless remembrance of God with implicit faith and intense love can result in direct perception of God through His grace. Self-effort which has its limits can only help one to earn the grace of God without which it is impossible to have His vision.

Bestowal of God's grace is not arbitrary or whimsical and it is granted to those who intimately love God to such an extent that their mind and intellect are unconditionally surrendered to Him and thoughts about world or family do not enter their mind at all. God spontaneously reciprocates such pure and unselfish love by showering His grace. The

vision of God is had in the temple of their own heart by those who possess such motiveless devotion. The experience of all sages, seers, mystics and prophets in this regard has been one of ecstasy and bliss arising out of an inner vision of God. Words cannot express such intensely personal feelings.

The *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* says "Those who meditate on Him with their mind undistracted and fixed in the heart know Him and they become immortal."

Those who search for God with all sincerity at the right place and in the right manner will undoubtedly find Him in God's good time. Readers interested in knowing more about the subject are advised to read Chapter IX of *Gītā*. The Upanisadic sages who had realised the transcendent and immanent Lord say that God is not only within but also everywhere. *Gītā* also echoes this profound truth as "*Vāsudevaḥ Sarvam iti*" (All is Vāsudeva).

Keeping in view the above, can anyone claim that man who is created in the likeness and image of God is not subject to any law and can behave in any manner he likes? Should one subserve one's personal interests at the cost of others in society? Experience clearly shows that the persons who abused their freedom and exceeded their bounds paid a very heavy price in the long run. In the interests of his own well-being man should, therefore, learn to live within the confines of the eternal, moral and spiritual laws.



The life of an aspirant is one long series of renunciation and daily sacrifice. He lives to serve others and make them happy. He forgets all about himself. He has no selfishness or ego.

—Swami Sivananda

Read and Digest

Fixing Thy mind on Me, thou shalt, by My grace, overcome all obstacles; but if from selfconceit thou wilt not hear Me thou shalt perish.

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There is no vice greater than prying into the faults of others.

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We must stop experiencing ourselves as the mind and become aware of ourselves as the Self. This is done by shifting the centre of gravity of our attention from the mind to the Self. The preliminary intellectual conviction that we are the Self must be replaced by the living experience of the Self.

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Why demand anything from the worldly persons? Why not demand from God Himself, so that all your demands may be fulfilled and you may be above wants.

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As space which is verily one appears differently in pots etc., similarly the Self, which is verily one, appears differently, like the sun in water vessels (*Yaj. Yati* 3. 144).

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Loving only the good in God and nature—even a child does that. You should love the terrible and the painful as well. A father loves the child, even when he is giving him trouble.



Kill Desire

—Swami Sivananda

Arjuna said—"But, dragged on by what does a man commit sin, reluctantly indeed, O Vārṣṇeya, as it were by force constrained?" The Blessed Lord said—"It is desire, it is wrath, begotten by the quality of mobility, all-consuming and all-polluting—know thou this as our foe here on earth. As a flame is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo is wrapped by the amnion, so this (Knowledge) is enveloped by it. Enveloped is divine wisdom by this constant enemy of the wise in the form of desire, which is insatiable as a flame. The senses, the mind and the reason are said to be its seat; by these, enveloping wisdom, it bewilders the dweller in the body. Therefore, O best of the Bharatas, mastering first the senses, do thou slay this thing of sin, destructive of wisdom and knowledge. It is said that the senses are great; greater than the senses is the mind; greater than the mind is reason; but that which is greater than reason, is He. Thus understanding Him as greater than reason, restraining the self by the Self, slay thou, O mighty-armed, the enemy in the form of desire, difficult to overcome" (*Bhagavadgītā* III. 36—43).

Desires can never be satiated or cooled down by the enjoyment of objects. But as fire blazes forth the more when fed with oil and wood, so it grows the more when it feeds on objects of enjoyment. If all the foods of the earth, all the precious metals, all animals and all beautiful women were to pass into the possession of a man deluded by desire, they would fail to give him satisfaction.

Emperor Yayāti ruled over his subjects in a righteous manner for many years. At last, when overcome with old age, he called his oldest son Yadu and spoke to him—"O child! Old age, wrinkles and white hair have come over me, but I have not yet got over the longings of youth. O Yadu! Take upon yourself my old age and consequent decrepitude in exchange for your youth. When one thousand years will be completed I shall return your youth to you and take back my decrepitude and its consequent weakness."

Yadu did not agree to exchange his youth for his father's old age. Yayāti approached the next three sons, but they also declined. Then the youngest son, Puru, told Yayāti, "O great king! I shall do as you command me. I shall take upon myself your old age and its consequences. Take my youth and enjoy the pleasures of life. At your command I shall assume your old age and occupy the throne."

Yayāti became a youth of Puru's age. Puru took Yayāti's age and governed the kingdom. Yayāti was extremely delighted. He again plunged into the pleasures of life. He enjoyed life for a long time. He enjoyed himself to the utmost extent; yet he was not satiated. Then he spoke—"O son, I have enjoyed with your youth to the full extent of my desires and to the full limit of my powers and according to their seasons—but desires never die. They are never satiated by indulgence. By indulgence they flame up like sacrificial fire with ghee poured into it. If one becomes the sole Lord of all the earth with its paddy, oats, gems, beasts and women, still it will not be considered by him to be enough. Therefore the thirst for enjoyment should be abandoned. The thirst for enjoyment which is difficult to cast off by the wicked, which does not fail even with the failing of life, is truly a fatal disease in man. To get rid of this thirst is real happiness."

Understand that desire that is born of the quality of

Rajas is man's enemy in this world. The real enemy of the whole world is desire. It is from this desire that all the evils and miseries come to human beings. When desire manifests it goads man to action and so he commits sins of various sorts. When a man's desire is not gratified, when someone stands in the way of its fulfilment, he becomes angry. The desire gets transmuted into anger. When a man is under the sway of anger he will commit all sorts of sins. He loses his memory, intellect and understanding. An angry man commits murder. He himself does not know what he is exactly doing. He becomes very emotional and impulsive. All evil actions and evil qualities proceed from anger.

When desire gets hold of a man it hides the knowledge of his true nature from him. Desire enshrouds wisdom, just as smoke enshrouds fire. He becomes egoistic. He gets deluded. He becomes a slave of passion and gets miseries of all sorts.

The senses bring the man in contact with external objects and the desires are thereby created. But the senses are not all-in-all. If the mind co-operates with the senses, then only is mischief wrought. Mind is more powerful than the senses. Mind is the commander. Reason is more powerful than the mind. Even if the mind brings a message into the mental factory by its association with the senses, the pure reason can reject it altogether. Reason is more powerful than the mind. Behind reason is the Self who is the director and witness of reason and who is superior to reason. Desire is of a highly complex and incomprehensible nature. Therefore it is very difficult to eradicate it or conquer it, but with the help of pure reason all desires can be eventually destroyed. There is no doubt of this.



Bhakta Gāthā

The Great Polymath—Vedānta Deśika

—Prof. K. R. Rajagopalan

More than seven centuries ago, there lived a great man, who was a *Bhakta*, composer *par excellence* in three languages—*Saṁskṛta*, *Tamil* and *Prākṛta*; he is considered to be one of the greatest—if not the greatest, exponent of the concept of surrender or *Śaraṇāgati*, the bedrock of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* philosophy of Śrī Rāmānujācārya. Perhaps, he was also the last well known Brahmin, who practised *Uñchavṛtti* (ceremonial begging) for his livelihood, shunning all wealth except his own God. He was well versed in all branches of learning as then known and mastered the *Tamil Divya Prabandha*, which are considered as equivalent to the *Vedas* by the followers of Śrī Rāmānuja.

Such an illustrious figure, whose name is still recited with reverence by a small group of *Śrīvaiṣṇavas* of South India daily—requires to be made known to a larger circle of persons for the vastness of his output, depth of learning and conviction and above all, living a life of dedication and service all his long life of 100 years and more.

An attempt would be made in this article to highlight some of his numerous achievements; with a request that some, at least, of his works should be studied by scholars of repute all over the country.

Brief Life Sketch—

He was born under the star *Śravaṇa* (*Śraviṣṭhā*, the 22nd star of the scheme of 27 stars in our almanac), in the Tamil month of *Purattasi* (Sept. to Oct.) in the *Vibhava*

year of the cycle of sixty years. The year in the modern scheme of reckoning would be 1268 A.D. He lived a really full and fruitful life like his great *Guru* Rāmānujācārya for 102 years and passed away in glory in 1369. He was born to Anantasūri and Totarambā in the village Tooppul near Kanchipuram, the famous seat of learning of yore. Since he was born with the grace of the Lord of the Seven Hills, he was aptly named Venkaṭanātha, also as his star of birth coincided with that of the Lord. His father was the grandson of one of the direct disciples of Rāmānuja; and Venkaṭanātha studied *Veda*, *Vedāṅga*, *Tamil Prabandhas* of the Ālwārs under his maternal uncle Appulār (the Tamil equivalent of Garuḍa), before he was 20 years old. Duly he got married to Tirumangaiyār, a pious lady who bore him the only son Varadācārya (named after the Deity of Kanchipuram). The son also became quite famous for his erudition and wrote commentaries on some of his father's works.

Then he made a pilgrimage to nearby places like Tiruvahindrapuram (spent 18 years or so there), Madurantakam (Rāma), Tirukkoijur (where the Lord is manifest in the form of Tiruvikrama) and returned to Kanchi. He continued giving discourses on Rāmānuja's works, *Ālwārs Prabandhams* and his own works for nearly two decades. Later, he started on a Northern tour and visited a number of places like—Tirupathi-Tirumala, Brindavan, Mathura, Ayodhya, Kashi, Naimisaranya, Badari, Saligrama, Dwaraka, Ahobilam, Puri and Tiruvellore. He appears to have visited Mamallapuram (where Lord manifests Himself as lying on the earth itself) and Tiruvallikeni—a village (now a part of) near Madras. During these travels he met Vidyāraṇya one of the *Gurus* of the Vijayanagara kingdom (more about this later).

At the behest of the *Śrīvaiṣṇavas* of Srirangam, hallowed by the three great *Ācāryas*—Nāthamuni, Yāmanamuni and Rāmānuja and verily the Bhūloka Vaikuṇṭham—he met

and won over an *Advaitin* scholar and the arguments he used have been compiled into a work labelled *Ṣaṭadūṣanī*. He continued his stay there for about 2-3 decades continuing his discourses on religious matters.

The Muslim invasion under Malika Kāfur affected Srirangam also and the devotees put up a wall in front of the main deity so as to make it invisible and took away the *Utsava Vigrahas* to places of safety. (After nearly 30 or 50 years when a local chieftain threw the Muslims out, the *Utsava Vigrahas* were brought back, the intervening wall removed and *Pūjā* started once again). *Vedānta Deśika* by now more famously known by this sobriquet had to flee with the two sons of Sudarśana Bhaṭṭācāriar and his commentary on *Śrībhāṣya*. He followed the path of Rāmānuja who too had to flee the Tamil country due to the Chola king's persecusion to the Kannada country, the (old) Mysore state. Veṅkaṭanātha stayed at Melkote—the hill shrine of Lord Sampath Kumāra and Yoga Narasimha for another two decades or so. He visited the Southern holy places like Ālwār Thirunagari (birth place of Nāmmālwār), Srivilliputhur (birth place of Āṇḍāl) and other places. Once peace had been restored at Srirangam, Deśika returned to the place and later went to Kanchi, where he breathed his last at the holy feet of Lord Varadarāja after having completed a very fruitful life of more than 101 years.

His works—

Veṅkaṭanātha wrote quite a large number of works—more than 120 works; and as is customary with 'older' authors not all of them are available today. Those that are extant can be broadly classified into three categories—*Stotras* for recitation; literary works worth a detailed study as literature; didactic works on philosophy and religion especially *Śrīvaiṣṇavam*. He wrote in three languages—*Saṁskṛta*, *Prākṛta* and his mother tongue *Tamil*. Into his *Saṁskṛta*

compositions, he has introduced some unique prosodic characteristics like *Eduḡai* (Rhyming of the second letter in each line of a poem, common in Tamil and Kannada. Bhāsa, a dramatist of fame before Kālidāsa has used this artifice in some stanzas of his in his plays). Into his Tamil compositions, he has brought in *Prāsa* and *Anuprāsa* which are the hallmark of *Samiskṛta* poetics. This shows that he was equally well-versed in both languages and could write effortlessly in either of them. It is said that his Tamil works contain all that are contained in his *Samiskṛta* ones, but the converse is not strictly true! This shows his special love for Tamil and he has used quite a few of the available meters in Tamil poetics about 16 different ones. He was proud of calling himself as "belonging to *Tamil Veda*"—just as we call ourselves Ṛgvedins or Yajurvedins etc.

We shall in the sequel, try to highlight some of the aspects of the three types of works.

Stotras—

There are about 25 *Stotras* of Veṅkaṭanātha on the various Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu pantheon especially Viṣṇu and His consort Lakṣmī in their various manifestations. On the Tirumala Tirupathi deity, he has composed *Dayāśatakam* highlighting the infinite mercy of that Lord; on the Lord of Srīraṅgam his *Bhagavad Dhyāna Sopānam* is a beautiful lyrical work; on Lord Varadarāja of Kanchi he has a string of about 50 verses. On Lakṣmī, he has a *Śrīstuti* of 25 verses which were composed when a young lad wanted money for marrying! *Bhūstuti* has more than 30 stanzas and for Āṇḍāl, the mystic *Bhakta* who merged with Lord Raṅganātha he has almost an equal number of verses. (It is only 200—300 years later that Mīrā of Rajasthan took birth). There are *Stotras* on the various temples of Kanchi, Tiruvaheendrapuram etc. There is one on the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu and one separately on

Lakṣmī Narasiṃha. He has *Stotras* on Hayagrīva, Garuḍa and the like. *Rāmāyaṇa* he summarises in Raghuvīra Gadyam, prose with a poetic tinge. He has used a plethora of meters like *Anuṣṭup*, *Śikharinī*, *Mandākrāntā*, *Mālinī* *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*, *Daṇḍaka*.

In *Prākṛta* he has composed *Acyuta Śatakam* a string of 100 verses. In Tamil, he has a number of poems using, as usual, more than one meter.

It would be easy to appreciate that Vedānta Deśika has followed Ādi Śaṅkara in such compositions in such large numbers.

Literary works—

Veṅkaṭanātha wrote *Samkalpa Sūryodayam*, an allegorical play in ten acts. This, while extolling the 'dawn of the divine grace' explains the *Viśiṣṭādvaita* philosophy countering the Advaitic conclusions of another play *Prabodha Candrodāyam* by Kṛṣṇa Miśrā. His *Sandeśa Kāvya*, *Haṃsa Sandeśam* is obviously modelled on *Meghasandeśa* of Kavi Kālidāsa (the writer is not sure whether there is any other such *Kāvya* at all in *Samskṛta*). His *Yādavābhyudāyam* is on the lines of *Raghuvamśam* of Kālidāsa; could also be taken as a rejoinder to Dīṇḍima Kavi's *Rāghavābhyudāyam*. His monumental work—*Pādukā Sāhasram* is in praise of the greatness of *Pādukā*, the holy sandals of Lord Raṅganātha. It is said he composed this *Kāvya* as a challenge, in one single night; his challenger was able to recite only about 300 verses. These show that he richly deserved the title *Kavitārṅkikakesarī*. Veṅkaṭanātha says in this work as follows—If the thousand faced Lord Himself should will to write about the resplendent majesty, splendour and beauty of His own *Pādukā*, the sky should be converted into paper to write and all the seven seas should become ink! What an imagery! We usually say even the thousand tongued Ādiśeṣa would not be able to say (or write) more.

But not our great polymath; he has his own inimitable imagination.

The title *Vedāntācāryā* was, it is said, conferred on him by Lord Raṅganātha's command and *Sarvatantra*—*Swatantra* by the grace of Devī Raṅganāyakī, scholars and poets assembled around bestowed on him Kavitārkkikasimha.

(To be continued)



संध्यां प्राक्प्रातरेवं हि तिष्ठेदासूर्यदर्शनात्।
अग्निकार्यं ततः कुर्यात्संध्ययोरुभयोरपि॥

("The *Japa* of *Sāvitrī Mantra*) should be done at both the twilights after exercising *Prāṇāyāma* and sprinkling water over the head with purificatory sacred formulas facing the east early in the morning till the sunrise and facing west untill the stars are visible in the evening."

—*Yājñavalkya Smṛti* (I. 25)

It is not proper for a righteous person to tell a lie or do something false.....The mind is like white linen fresh from the laundry; it takes the colour in which you dip it. If it is associated with falsehood for a long time, it will be stained with falsehood.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

Truth

A true word needs no oath.

Great is Truth—fire cannot burn, nor water drown it.

Truth needs no memory.

When you add to the truth, you subtract from it.

—*Other Men's Flowers*

Blissful Thoughts of Akrūra

Akrūra, having set off in his quick travelling car, proceeded to visit Kṛṣṇa at the pastures of Nanda; and, as he went along, he congratulated himself on his superior good fortune, in having an opportunity of beholding a descended portion of the deity. "Now", thought he—"Has my life borne fruit; my night is followed by the dawn of day; since I shall see the countenance of Viṣṇu, whose eyes are like the expanded leaf of the lotus. I shall behold that lotus eyed aspect of Viṣṇu, which, when seen only in imagination, takes away the sins of men. I shall today behold that glory of glories, the mouth of Viṣṇu, whence proceeded the *Vedas*, and all their dependant sciences. I shall see the sovereign of the world, by whom the world is sustained; who is worshipped as the best of males, as the male of sacrifice in sacrificial rites. I shall see Keśava who is without beginning or end; by worshipping whom with a hundred sacrifices, Indra obtained the sovereignty over the gods. That Hari, whose nature is unknown to Brahmā, Indra, Rudra, the Aśvins, the Vasus, Ādityas, and Maruts, will this day touch my body. The soul of all, the knower of all, he who is all, and is present in all, he who is permanent, undecaying, all-pervading, will converse with me. He, the unborn, who has preserved the world in the various forms of a fish, a tortoise, a bore, a horse, a lion, will this day speak to me. Now the Lord of the earth, who assumes shapes at will, has taken upon him the condition of humanity, to accomplish some object cherished in his

heart. That Ananta, who holds the earth upon his crest, and who has descended upon earth for its protection, will this day call me by my name. Glory to that being, whose deceptive adoption of father, son, brother, friend, mother, and relative, the world is unable to penetrate. Glory to him, who is one with true knowledge, who is inscrutable, and through whom, seated in his heart, the *Yogī* crosses the wide expanse of worldly ignorance and illusion. I bow to him, who, by the performers of holy rites, is called the male of sacrifice (*Yajñapurusa*); by pious worshippers is termed *Vāsudeva*: and by the cultivators of philosophy, *Viṣṇu*. May he in whom cause and effect, and the world itself, is comprehended, be propitious to me, through his truth; for always do I put my trust in that unborn, eternal *Hari*: by meditation on whom, man becomes the repository of all good things."

His mind thus animated by devout faith, and meditating in this manner, Akrūra proceeded on his road, and arrived at Gokula a little before sunset, at the time of the milking of the cows; and there he saw *Kṛṣṇa* amongst the cattle, dark as the leaf of the full blown lotus; his eyes of the same colour, and his breast decorated with the *Śrīvatsa* mark; long armed, and broad chested; having a high nose, and a lovely countenance, brightened with mirthful smiles; treading firmly on the ground, with feet whose nails were tinted red; clad in yellow garments, and adorned with a garland of forest flowers; having a fresh-gathered creeper in his hand, and a chaplet of white lotus flowers on his head. Akrūra also beheld there *Balabhadra*, white as a jasmine, a swan, or the moon, and dressed in blue raiment; having large and powerful arms, and a countenance as radiant as a lotus in bloom; like another *Kailāsa* mountain, crested with a wreath of clouds.

When Akrūra saw these two youths, his countenance expanded with delight, and the down of his body stood

erect with pleasure: for this he thought to be supreme happiness and glory; the double manifestation of the divine Vāsudeva; this was the twofold gratification of his sight, to behold the creator of the universe: now he hoped that his bodily form would yield fruit, as it would bring him in contact with the person of Kṛṣṇa; and that the wearer of infinite forms would place his hand on his back; the touch of whose finger alone is sufficient to dispel sin, and to secure imperishable felicity: that hand which launches the fierce irresistible discus, blazing with all the flames of fire, lightning, and the sun, and slaughtering the demon host washes the collyrium from the eyes of their brides: that hand into which Bali poured water, and thence obtained ineffable enjoyments below the earth, and immortality and dominion over the gods for a whole *Manvantara*, without peril from a foe. "Alas! He will despise me, for my connexion with Kāṁsa, an associate with evil, though not contaminated by it. How vain is his birth who is shunned by the virtuous? And yet what is there in this world unknown to him who resides in the hearts of all men, who is ever existent, exempt from imperfection, the aggregate of the quality of purity, and identical with true knowledge? With a heart wholly devoted to him, then, I will approach the lord of all lords, the descended portion of *Puruṣottama*, of Viṣṇu, who is without beginning, middle or end."



God, according to the Jewish and Mohammedan idea, is a big sessions Judge. Our God is rigorous on the surface, but loving and merciful at heart.

—Swami Vivekananda

Death Experience

(Continued from page 803)

—C. V. Bhimasankaram

(1) 'Death' is different from 'Death Experience'.

(2) 'Death' is an end; whereas the 'Death Experience' is a means of Self-realization.

(3) Sleep is temporary death whilst death is longer sleep.

(4) 'Death' is intervening sleep between two successive births; while sleep intervenes two *Jāgrats* and both are transient.

(5) Conscious 'Death Experience' is the purpose of evolution, and conscious immortality whilst still in the flesh.

(6) Unconscious 'Death Experience' leads to next-birth.

(7) Appearance of fearful objects like tiger, snakes etc., makes one to wake up from a dream. The fear of death is essential to wake up from this so called "Real dream of the world." (World is like a dream).

(8) Self-realization is the resultant product of 'Death Experience.' It is instantaneous.

(9) *Maharṣis* used penance as a means of 'Death Experience.'

(10) Sitting near cremation grounds, confinement in closed room, moving with wild animals etc., were some of the means adopted by recent *Jñānīs*.

(11) 'Death Experience' does not constitute: Torturing the body Controlling the mind/ body etc., through Yoga Suicide.

(12) No place for negative thoughts in 'Death Experience'.

The anatomy of 'Death' goes in the positive direction.

(13) In 'Death Experience', nothing, is going to die. The

mind, the aggregate of thoughts, destroys by itself, leaving the Residual Reality.

(14) Death Experience is not a theoretical concept. It is an experience in itself.

(15) It is sort of real *Pralaya*.

(16) In Death Experience: *Ahaṁkāra* gets converted into *Ātmakāra* *Avicāra* turns into *Ātmavicāra*.

(17) It takes in three steps: Observation of somebody's death, self-analysis of one's own death, and explaining the phenomenon of Death in nature.

(18) The calculative life will not be crowned with spiritual success. So one should welcome this Death Experience. All *Jñānīs* have undergone this 'Death Experience', in one form or the other.



We should take God alongwith us in everything we do—and that includes business. Business and spiritual life are not mutually contradictory. On the contrary, they support each other. If we apply spiritual principles in a business that business will flourish. And if in doing business we strive to please God and to serve His children, we will grow spiritually. Activity and meditation, like two horses, pull our wagon of life toward our salvation. Both are necessary.

—Self-Realization

A special power comes from God to those who have a pure and steady love of humanity. The more you spend your energy in elevating and serving others, the more divine energy will flow into you.

—Swami Sivananda

Kathā

"Your attention please. The audience should not try to occupy the front line. Avoid pushing and jostling each other and consequently disturbing the gathering." This type of announcement was being made frequently and it was for valid reasons. It is a common tendency that whatever be the reasons but most of the people try to reach the platform occupied by the *Vyāsa*, the narrator, with the pretext to offer some presents like sweets, fruits, flowers or wreath. If not these, some persons try to go to the platform for offering their salutations from a close quarter and try to get them accommodated in the first row.

"Kindly do not commit sin in the course of earning virtue" went on the announcement—"It will be a sin if you become a disturbing element. You will push some persons in this process, you will unintentionally touch others with your feet and consequently incur sin." Even the *Vyāsa* occasionally repeated such announcements when he thought it necessary.

Motivated by enthusiasm to reach the first row and offer their salutations and wreath, people forget it that they are disturbing *Kathā*. Going ahead pushing and trampling others is also a sin which they do not try to realize.

Some people pretend to be more clever than what they really are. Only they think they are, otherwise such cleverness that causes harm, is foolishness. It is alright that by means fair or foul, you reached the front row and

procured an advantageous location to have a look on the narrator's face and hear him clearly but in this process you have killed the piousness in the very beginning. You forgot that you would be doing a wrong thing by depriving a number of persons of the advantage which you procured. Is it not a sin? You go there with the intention of acquiring knowledge, virtue and many other qualities. But what did you gain? Simply a sin in the guise of an advantage.

"You will bid *Praṇāma*, offer a wreath of flowers and may be some money also. It is all very kind of you. But not now. Let the *Kathā* finish. I will be sitting here for sometime. You can do it then. At present please be kind and sit wherever you are." He closed the doors for all such clever tactics.

"Nobody will offer any money. You can offer sweets or fruits on the *Vyāsa Pīṭha* but there should remain no misunderstanding in your minds. All your offerings will be distributed among the audience. *Vyāsa* will take nothing from your offerings"—announced the announcer. He continued—"Anything, any cloth or any money, the *Vyāsa* does not accept." This was disclosed at the end of the *Kathā*.

It appeared somewhat strange in my mind—"Accepts nothing? Then why does he narrate *Kathā* without a motive?"

It was a very fine sweet and enchanting discourse of a rare type. Expressions were most touching and attractive. It is only after hearing the narration on that particular verse of *Bhāgavata*, I felt in me a magnetic attraction for the narrator. It was strengthened more when I learnt that he was doing it for no monetary gain.

I retired from the gathering as there was no sense in having a personal meeting with him. At present he is surrounded by a crowd of admirers. I am a bit allergic to the rush of such types. It is inconvenient to all the parties concerned.

X

X

X

"I attended your discourse yesterday." I said, when I

had the opportunity to meet him personally at his residence. I paid my obeisance to him and occupied a corner seat. There was no privacy which of course I did not expect to find. But it was no reason for any disappointment because I didn't have anything to talk confidentially.

But the reply which I received was a bit shocking to me and I was taken a back. He said—"It appeared to me very beautiful. Rarely one has a chance to hear such discourses. I am a great scholar and I am expert, skilful narrator. That is what you would like to say. Is it not so?" By saying this he made me speechless and himself was laughing merrily.

I took sometime to compose myself and then tried to say—"Well by being only a good scholar....."

Again he did not allow me to complete my sentence and interrupted—"Such discourse cannot be made. I am a real devotee, self-realized and experienced man. I have had the direct vision of Lord. Several miracles I can perform. Why, is that what you want to say?"

What reply could I have made? I felt a little embarrassed.

He laughed and further said—"It is not unknown to me that I am a scholar and a good narrator. I had always been working hard with honest sincerity in my profession and still I do it. Before I come to the platform all and every available literature concerning the present topic and *Śloka* I go through studiously. It is not unnatural for him to have a self awareness about his success in the performance who puts sufficient labour in the matter." He went on after a pause—"But don't get emotional. True devotion, divine vision, self-realization or miracles have nothing to do with my success. It is simply a superimposition on me from your side."

"But the depth of study and how you explained....."

Again he interrupted me and I could not complete my sentence. He said—"These talks today you also have heard.

Now when you relay it to the others you will also appear before them as an experienced man. Never forget that being swayed by the emotions is not always good. These are not my original things. I have simply repeated them. This is another thing that like everybody else I also have a right to study their books."

"Then why do you make discourses?" The question in itself was so embarrassing that I myself felt a little awkward.

"This is a means for me." Now he was serious. He continued—"I am a traditional narrator and it has been my family profession. I was a small kid since when I was given intensive training for this job. In the beginning it was to me simply a means for livelihood and still it is so even now."

"But you don't accept any offering by the audience...?"

Yes, I do not sell *Kathā*. Said he—"I had never made a bargain for my fee. Some of the people do this job on contract basis and when I learnt this fact I was greatly pained. Formerly enough of offerings I did accept. But when there was a dawn of wisdom in my mind I came to different sort of conclusion. Should I sell the very means of my life? What shall remain with me?"

"Then how do you say that it is still the source of your livelihood?"

"Yes, it is still the source of my bread. The only difference is that I do not take the offerings that the believers offer on the book or the *Vyāsa Pīṭha* with a hope to earn virtuous fruits. But there are some other people who subscribe privately to support my body and fulfil my bare necessities. That is enough for me."

"So you have made *Kathā* only a means to obtain the end, is it so?"

"Yes, I made a start from the point where this *Kathā* was a means for my bread but now it has been converted into a means for my spiritual upliftment." He sat erect

and gazing at my face with a steady look spoke—"It is needless to point out to a person like you that attending spiritual discourses is only a means. When a listener hears the spiritual discourses and pastimes and glory of the Lord then his mind slowly gets absorbed in it. The speaker has got to make a thorough study and remembers the collected matters and then reproduces before the audience. He has to deploy his mental faculties and concentrate them."

"It is not for the first time that I have come in contact with a *Kathāvācaka*" said I in a somewhat disgusted mood.

"They have got their problems." He remained serious and spoke further—"One who has got to move always in strange circles he had to deal with new persons every now and then. Hence he is not expected to be unmindful to his needs. There is nothing strange if he frankly asks for something or on occasions becomes obstinate. We can say that the circumstances make him selfish. Only his own conveniences occupy prominent place. Tell me, how many persons are there who while travelling in trains are careful to provide some facilities to their fellow travellers or at least do not create inconveniences to them." I kept silent but my facial gestures were eloquent enough to betray my feelings. The thoughts rather a train of thoughts, ran in my mind. These days it has become a fashion to acknowledge one's weaknesses. Everybody says that he knows that it is a weakness but he cannot give it up. Well, if it is a weakness leave it. Stop posing to be a *Mahātmā*. Stop delivering lectures on spiritual issues. Put a full stop to your public life. The more you spread your individuality the more weaknesses will appear in your life. You preach renunciation and dispassion from the rostrum but at the same time you always think of remuneration—a substantial amount; you advise others not to hanker for social honour and position but at the same time your face reddens at the smell of

disrespect from even a remote corner. Well, what right have you got to be a preacher or narrator? Had there been a *Rāmarājya*, such preachers would have been in prisons or adorned is a debatable issue. When Balarāma said in Naimiṣāranya "वध्या मे धर्मध्वजिनस्ते हि पातकिनोऽधिकाः" "Deserve these so called religious men to be killed because they are greater sinners (as they commit sin in the garb of righteousness)" and killed Sūta the famous narrator of *Purāṇas*. This is what I was thinking. I did not tell these things but no wonder if the disgust must have appeared on my face.

"Your indignation is justified" said he "I take it to be an auspicious sign that there is such resentment in the modern youth." The people who adopt the divine glory, pastime as a means to earn money they get it. They read books, they memorize books to relay. They are simply records. They can be played on. They would be producing sounds. That is all. By record playing, the machine does not get purified. But they think that the discourses on renunciation, service, penance, devotion or the real knowledge, are the things only to be relayed to the audience. He was still serious and he continued—"Even the relaying is not bad in itself. I also do the same" now he smiled but again became serious. But the difference is that I do not feel enthusiastic to do this thing in order to please some millionaire, minister or big office bearer. I have to go for *Kathā*—the moment it comes in the mind I feel that He is summoning me. He will come in the form of numerous listeners. He is very much interested in hearing his own *Kathā*. Therefore I must do labour. I must do it with all sincerity."

Now there was nothing left for me to say. I put my head on his feet, bade good bye to him and came back.



Make Others Happy

—Subhash Lakhota

The aim of this human birth is to make others happy. Sometimes a man thinks that he cannot make others happy because he has not so much of money power at his command so as to donate liberally amongst the poor and thus make them happy. Do remember, money spending in charity is just one of the ways to make people happy, by donating for charities. Innumerable are the occasions available to a human being which do not demand your money just to make others happy. Rendering small courtesies to the humanity at large costs nothing to you and in turn make others happy and then you are showered with a lot more good wishes coming from the core of their hearts. To remain cheerful in the happiness of the sympathetic in the agony of others is a way to make happy. It costs you nothing.

Helping an old man on the wayside in just lifting a bundle of his/her goods on his head or help in making a person cross the road or just answering the question of an unknown pedestrian on the correct location of the address he is searching for or lending your lower berth in a train compartment to a woman with young child are just some of the specimens of the common courtesies which can be extended by you to your fellow brethren without effecting any constraint of money or time on you. Why not extend these small courtesies of life to the persons surrounding you and you will surely find that you

experience inner happiness in comparison with the person to whom you have extended these courtesies.

Mind it always while extending these small courtesies you should be ever smiling and cheerful. Swāmī Vivekānanda has said "By being pleasant always and smiling, it takes you nearer than any prayer." Hence continue to develop the habit of extending small courtesies in this world with a smile on your face and cheerfulness all round.



By having a liking for pleasures and prosperity, it is not possible to attain God-realization. These days the main reason, why people don't understand the things of spiritualism and God-realization, is that they don't give up their liking for pleasures and accumulation, neither do they want to give it up from the heart and without giving up this liking, the topic of God-realization can't be understood.

—Swami Ramsukhdas

Religion does not consist in erecting temples, or building churches, or attending public worship. It is not to be found in books, or in words, or in lectures, or in organisations. Religion consists in realisation. As a fact we all know that nothing will satisfy us until we know the truth for ourselves. However we may argue, however much we may hear, but one thing will satisfy us, and that is our own realisation; and such an experience is possible for everyone of us if we will only try.

—Swami Vivekananda

One Thing at a Time

You must not do any work perfunctorily or in a careless, half-hearted manner, without taking any interest. You cannot evolve if you take this attitude of mind. The whole heart, mind, intellect and soul must be in the work, then only can you call it *Yoga* or worship of God. Some people have their hands at the work, the mind at the market, the intellect in the office and the soul upon the wife or son. This is bad. You must do all work efficiently and perfectly. The motto should be: One thing at a time and that done well is a very good rule as many can tell." If your *Guru* or friend asks you to wash a towel, take his clothes also for washing without his knowledge. If your preceptor says—"Bring me some groundnut oil," extract the oil in the twinkling of an eye and take it in a cup to your *Guru*. Run to him with the cup in your hand, with panting breath, with your body bathed in profuse perspiration, and say—"O venerable Master, dispeller of my ignorance! Here is the oil for Thee." If a passer-by asks for a cup of water say to him with courtesy, in sweet words—"Brother, take your seat. Here is water. Here is a cup of milk for you. Rest a while on this seat. I shall massage your legs and fan you. You are tired." This is real service. This is real *Yoga*. If you do service with this mental attitude for one or two years you will become an entirely changed being, a veritable God-man on this earth.

—Swami Sivananda

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